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ABSTRACT

Four areas of college management responsibility are reviewed: the mission of the organization; administrator/faculty relationship; individual stress; and measuring organizational health. According to Argyris (1980) an organization updates its goals (1) as a consequence of detecting and solving routine problems, and (2) through periodical reexamination of the governing policies and values of the organization. A survey of higher education professional organizations (Boulding and Van Patten, 1980) indicates that six of the top seven faculty concerns dealt with a lack of humaneness and justice within the organization. Ways to improve administrator/staff relationships include encouraging bona fide, responsible dissent and allowing faculty representation in governance. The effectiveness of collective negotiations depends on the good will and overall consensus of all groups involved in campus governance. The following types of individual stress are addressed: burnout, role conflict, peer cohesiveness, and general morale. Signs of psychological burnout are a signal that the organization is causing problems. Faculty members are not always able to cope effectively with organizational politics. Research identifies role conflict and role ambiguity as principal sources of organizational stress (Parasuraman and Allutto, 1981). Latham and Kinne (1974) found that individuals in a healthy organization find satisfaction in working together to accomplish shared goals. Four important leadership skills to facilitate peer cohesiveness are identified, including mediating conflict and building networks. Approaches that have been used to maintain and improve morale include human potential seminars and the holistic health movement. Organizational types identified by Likert (1961) and research on the measurement of organizational health are noted. (SW)

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Creating A Healthy Organizational Climate

By James T. Bolding and James J. Van Patten

If an organization creates and maintains a healthy climate, the individuals in that organization will be comfortable in an atmosphere of planned change and adaptation.

Research and expository writings that center on institutions show increasing interest in a healthy organizational climate. Climate used to be be considered a static condition. The usual exercise was to collect information about the organization and use this data to describe and/or label its particular climate. Halpin (1966) identified climates as "paternal" where the administrator is seen as the "Godfather" to the individuals working for the organization. He described an "open" climate as one that facilitates two-way communication between staff and administrators and encourages the individuals in the organization to contribute to the philosophy and methods of the institution.

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More recently, a healthy organization is seen to be one with a dynamic climate. Such an organization must be concerned with its potential. Miles (1971) suggested that a healthy organization has a mechanism for planned change so that it can adapt to emerging conditions and situations.

In this review the authors considered four areas of management responsibility: the mission of the organization, administrator/faculty relationships, individual stress and measuring organizational health.

THE MISSION OF THE ORGANIZATION

Organizations exist to achieve a goal or set of goals. They seek to do this by accomplishing certain tasks (Owens and Steinhoff 1976). For example, one of the goals of a university is to ensure that the faculty have the knowledge they need to maintain and enrich their lives. This goal may be broken into specific tasks such as providing on-campus courses of study, offering extension courses, conducting research activities, and developing leadership. Thus, the principal gift the top administrator can give the organization is to define the objectives of the organization in clear terms that allow the effectiveness of the organization to be measured (Halpin 1966).

Argyris (1980) emphasizes the importance of having a system for updating the organization's goals. He presents two ways an organization may achieve this. First, the goals are updated as a consequence of detecting and solving routine problems. He identifies this as single-loop learning encompassing a circular process of discovering a problem, inventing a solution, producing the solution, and evaluating the production. The circle is complete when the evaluation leads to the discovery of new problems. The second path to updating goals is to periodically reexamine the governing policies and values of the organization. He refers the changing of governing values and policies as double-loop learning, suggesting that while the problems of accomplishing the organizational mission are being solved, the mission itself must be in a process of revision.

ADMINISTRATOR/FACULTY RELATIONSHIPS

The quality of the relationship between managers and staff is reflected in the style of management. Walton (1974) has found wide variations in the extent to which the organizational culture respects personal privacy, tolerates dissent, adheres to high standards of equity in distributing rewards, and provides for due process in work related matters. Due process, although it varies from one organization to another, is widely recognized as an an important tool for achieving justice and fairness, the ingredients for creating a climate of organizational health (Aram and Salipante 1981). Employers need to establish internal due process for handling conflict.

Employers need to establish internal due process procedures for handling conflict.

Such procedures should lead individuals to assume responsibility for their decisions and actions (Cavanagh, Moberg, and Velasquez 1981). Cavanagh, Moberg, and Velasquez further note that ethics involves standards of conduct, not guidelines for personal gain. When it comes to ethics of conflict resolution, respect for justice and human rights should prevail. A survey of higher education professional organizations indicates this is not always the case. Bolding and Van Patten

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(1980) found that six of the top seven faculty concerns dealt with a lack of humaneness and justice within the organization. In order to achieve organizational health, an institution of higher education must be concerned not only with its internal relationships, but also with its relationships to the larger social, economic, political, and philosophical changes and directions in society (Harper 1977).

To achieve an atmosphere of justice employees must be involved. De Board (1978) noted that unless individuals have opportunity to participate in organizational changes, they will not be able to influence the formation of new social systems. The result will be an increase in suspicion, hostility, and aggression. In the management of organizations, large and small, the tendency is toward democracy (Slater and Bennis 1978). As employees are involved more, they will be stimulated to produce more creative ideas for the organization (Fiedler 1981).

One way to achieve more involvement is through decentralizing authority to an optimal degree. Shafritz and Whitbeck (1978) suggest that decentralization is not good or bad in itself, capable of being adopted or discarded at the whim of managers or circumstance. It is usually present to a greater or lesser extent. The question of decentralization is a simple question of proportion. It is a matter of finding the optimal degree for the particular concern.

Stanley (1981) notes that administrators can improve administrator/staff relationships by encouraging bona fide responsible dissent. He observes that institutions of higher education have a natural self-sealing mechanism that squashes attempts to question educational policy. The effective administrator allows for faculty dissent through some routine fashion and provides necessary constraints designed to encourage coordination. Research reported by Potter and Fiedler (1981) indicated that when stress is high workers tend to rely on past experiences for solutions instead of applying intelligence and logic to the problems. When stress is low they are better able to apply logic in their search for solutions. Persons who have had good experiences may appear to work well under stress because their past experiences yield relevant solutions. However, persons with limited experience will appear to work poorly under stress because they are unable to relate the current problems to the past. Thus, the administrator who wants the worker to apply logic and reason to produce new solutions should strive to provide a stress-free interpersonal environment.

Another way of classifying administrator/staff relationships is autocratic versus democratic styles. McGregor (1960) identified these styles as Theory X (autocratic) and Theory Y (democratic and flexible). At one end of the continuum are those managerial styles that seek to direct, coerce, and control. At the other end are those styles designed to integrate the individual and the organization through a more open, democratic climate that emphasizes the importance of delegation, trust, and intrinsic job satisfaction (Burrell and Morgan 1979).

Ouchi (1981) introduces Theory Z to the list. Administrators who use Theory Z seek to bring administrators and faculty together as cooperative equals. They give recognition to faculty members for their help in bringing about the success of the organization. This recognition contributes to the personal satisfaction that comes from a sense of accomplishment. Administrators adopt an underlying philosphy of trust together with holistic concern for workers within the Theory Z style of management.

Collective bargaining has been found to emerge when there are feelings of individual powerlessness (Lee 1978) and a lack of faculty representation in governance (Driscoll 1978).

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Some administrators who think they are involving faculty members in policymaking may actually be seen by the group as giving preferential treatment to individuals not representative of the entire fac ulty (Lee 1978, 51). Distrust of organizational decision making has been cited as a reason for unionization on some campuses (Feild and Giles 1977). Research shows union contracts focus on extrinsic factors such as salary increases, maximum workload, and retrenchment policies (Lee 1978, 53). Lee also notes that the effectiveness of collective negotiations varies according to the institution's climate of openness and trust. Thus, the effectiveness of collective negotiations depends on the good will and overall consensus of all groups involved in campus governance.

Clearly, administrators should continually seek the optimal relationship for progressing toward the organizational goals.

INDIVIDUAL STRESS

Organizations achieve only what individuals achieve collectively. So, the personal well-being of the individuals within the organization is an essential element of organizational health (Ewing 1977). A healthy institution seeks to facilitate the involvement of members by providing for professional growth. Although individuals with knowledge and skills can be hired, one cannot hire team spirit; it must be cultivated (Cobb and Newton 1981). The organization must develop ways to help individuals achieve self-actualization and, at the same time, must identify and deal with those routines that lead to stress, stagnation, burnout, and depression (Kahn 1964, Kiev 1974; Cooper 1977). People within organizations continually evaluate their environment with an intuitive feel for how viable the institution is and how promising its future is (Katz and Kahn 1978). The sources of these perceptions will be described from four perspectives: psychological burnout, role conflict, peer cohesiveness, and general morale.

Burnout

Burnout is the popular term used to identify the psychological state that an individual experiences after working under stressful conditions for an extended period of time. Tiredness, sense of failure, inability to make decisions, difficulty in concentrating, and feelings of anxiety are a few symptoms of burnout (Cooper 1977). Administrators often view such symptoms as indications of an individual who might become a problem to the organization. However, the reverse should be considered too. Signs of psychological burnout are a signal that the organization is causing problems and that administrators should adjust procedures and assignments to help neutralize stressful situations (Goldhaber 1979).

Burnout may be dealt with from the top down in the traditional style of providing direction or from the bottom up where individuals are trained to recog-

nize the strain on their well-being within the organization. The advantage of the latter is that stress levels differ among individuals. The ability to recognize undue stress and take positive action to reduce it at an individual level can be most helpful in maintaining a healthy environment (Kahn et al. 1964). Faculty members who are able to arrange tasks and environments to regulate the stress they feel will require less attention from their administrators (Manz and Sims 1980). Manz and Sims also found that successful job performance had an important relationship to self-esteem and

Signs of psychological burnout are a signal that the organization is causing problems.

the ability to tolerate individual stress. They suggest that administrators involve faculty in determining assignments rather than use externally imposed programs such as management by objectives.

Faculty members are not always able to cope effectively with organizational politics. Training to assist faculty and staff in the use of organizational channels should reduce frustration and aid individuals in their efforts to induce organizational change (Kiev 1974). By channeling faculty energy into activities that have high probability of sucess, the always present political mechanizations that otherwise would seem unbearable are more adequately dealt with.

After studying decisions made under stress, Stanley (1981) found that groups of individuals who are experiencing unusual stress respond to new information negatively during the process of making decisions. He states that it is vital to encourage individuals to gather all the facts before starting the decision process.

Franklin (1981) finds that individuals cannot always identify and adjust to situations involving prolonged stress. They know something is wrong but can only describe the symptoms. This is much like the doctor-patient model where a patient complains of an illness and describes vague symptoms but does not know what is wrong. In such cases an outside consultant may be able to help diagnose and prescribe for the organization. Administrative consciousness and human relations skills are required to deal with the challenge. Any time burnout becomes noticeable, management is obligated to contemplate corrective action.

Role Conflict and Ambiguity

Research identifies role conflict and role ambiguity as principal sources of organizational stress. (Parasuraman and Allutto 1981). Also, the intensity of stress has been linked to the degree of role ambiguity (Aldag and Brief 1981). Latack (1981) notes that potential for role ambiguity exists when inadequate time and organizational resources are available to the individual to meet the expectations of the assumed role. The individual feels hopeless when time and resources are inadequate.

Role conflict may come from incompatible expectations of the people who surround the individual. The individual's role is defined by supervisors, subordinates, and colleagues; all are sending messages that can lead to role ambiguity and stress (Kahn et al. 1964; Bennis 1966). Work overloads may also contribute to role conflict and role ambiguity because overloads require an individual to choose to do some tasks while neglecting others. Work overloads have also been found to be associated with lower job satisfaction (Abdel-Halim 1981).

Other sources of stress are found in tasks that are too demanding, in roles that are unnatural for the individual, and in surroundings that are threatening (McGrath 1976). Thus, realistic job roles must be formulated, and management must be involved in the process. McGrath also notes that an

Faculty members are not always able to cope effectively with organizational politics.

individual may derive stress from conditions that are thought to require action by an unreliable administrator in order to avoid undesirable consequences. For example, faculty members may worry about class schedule conflicts because they fear the administrator has not checked for such things. Thus, it is not enough for administrators to be alert and proficient in the coordinating role. To reduce stress on the faculty, they should make those traits known.

Peer Cohesiveness

Latham and Kinne (1974) found that individuals in a healthy organization find satisfaction in working together to accomplish shared goals.

Saario (1979) suggests that individuals need to acquire interpersonal skills such as active listening and verbalizing emotions to help them establish and maintain a network of contacts with peers. The contribution individuals make to organizational tasks depends to a large degree on their feelings of belonging to the organizational team. Staff and faculty meetings may contribute to satisfying social needs. Initiates to an organization may come out of

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a group meeting with a greater sense of purpose because they feel the challenge of interrelating with older members who have obvious status. Occasionally new faculty are assigned to senior staff for initiation into the social group. Positive interpersonal relations with peers acts as a magnet drawing out the greatest potential of each individual (Goldhaber 1979). Thus, a healthy organization tends to satisfy the social-psychological needs of the individual (Likert 1961). The area of social-psychological needs is perhaps one of the most neglected areas of research concerning organizational climate.

Jewell and Reitz (1981) found that in groups working on interdependent tasks, cooperation facilitates productivity and competition interferes with it. When resources are scarce, competition becomes more likely and cooperation more difficult.

Saario (1979) lists four important leadership skills to facilitate peer cohesiveness: (1) the ability to establish and maintain a network of contacts with equals; (2) the ability to deal with subordinates and the complications of authority, power, and dependence; (3) the ability to mediate conflict, handle disturbances, and work under psychological stress; and (4) the ability to build networks and extract, validate, and disseminate information effectively.

General Morale

Cyert suggests a chief question for those in higher education is "How can the attention of faculties be kept focused on maintaining excellence in the face of forces pulling the attention to

survival?" (1980, 44). He cites departments fighting departments, colleges battling colleges, and professors turning to outside pursuits to supplement salaries. It takes extraordinary efforts to foment and maintain a healthy organizational climate when these problems exist.

A number of approaches have been used to maintain and improve morale. "Human Potential Seminars," are designed to enhance self-esteem by improving goal-setting and goal-attainment skills (Paritzky and Magoon 1979). These seminars seek to develop self-affirmation, selfdetermination, self-motivation, and regard for others.

individuals in a healthy organization find satisfaction in working together to accomplish shared goals.

"Holistic Health," another approach, is a movement focusing on the person as a whole. It is based on an individual's integration of body, mind, feelings, spirit, life-style, and physical and social environment—and on the interdependence of these factors in growth and change. The goal of the movement is to produce high organization morale by helping individuals feel good about their lives (Gross 1980).

In time of retrenchment when a number of faculty are laid off or fired, there is a potential morale problem for those who remain. Peterson (1980) recommended that administrators prepare programs for faculty development, conduct program reviews, and hold planning sessions to assist in maintaining morale and institutional loyalty of the faculty members who remain during retrenchment. Supervisory personnel who assist in creating organizational health can benefit from positive communication in goal-setting conferences (Barnett 1979).

Managers should recognize that lack of informaton rather than lack of skills may impede an individual's positive self-esteem and life satisfaction. It is important to keep faculty informed about both positive and negative changes in the status of the institution (Hudson and Danish 1980). Information acquisition skills according to Franklin (1981), suggest that training is good for organizational health just as vitamins are good for personal health. Examples of such training are seen in physical recreation programs and seminars in coping strategies for faculty and staff. Cameron (1981) identified four major domains of effectiveness that can be improved through faculty training programs: academic, morale, extracurricular, and external adaptation. Each institution of higher education needs managers to develop support systems for the faculty and staff in these domains.

MEASURING ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH

In 1961, Likert produced a questionnaire that classifed the management system of an institution into one of four types. These types formed a continuum from (1) exploitive authoritative, to (2) benevolent authoritative, to (3) consultative, to (4) participative group. Likert contended that the participative group is the most effective management approach. Dunwell (1981) constructed a five-point response questionnaire based on Likert's characteristics (1961, 1967) and designed to measure the presence of those characteristics at three organizational levels: the primary work group, the major administrative unit, and the university in general.

Halpin (1966) published the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire that measures eight factors: disengagement, hindrance, esprit, intimacy, aloofness, production emphasis, thrust, and consideration. These factors are usually seen as being within the influence of the administrator. For example, hindrance measures the extent that burdensome reports and paperwork interfere with the staff's engagement in primary tasks. Borrevik (1972) adapted Halpin's instrument for use in colleges and universities.

Fairman (1979) developed an instrument that measures 10 dimensions of organizational health identified by Miles (1971). These 10 dimensions were clustered into three components, as follows:

- task-center components: goal focus, communication adequacy, and power equalization
- internal state component: resource utilization, cohesiveness, and morale
- growth and changefulness component: innovativeness, autonomy, adaptation, and problem-solving adequacy.

when a number of faculty are laid off or fired, there is a potential morale problem for those who remain.

The instrument is a diagnostic tool to measure organizational effectiveness and to provide profiles upon which intervention strategies can be built. Although oriented toward public school systems, it is pertinent to higher education.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Creating organizational health is a continuing process for higher education institutions. A healthy organizational climate gives the institution an ability to anticipate circumstances and deal with challenges by freeing and utilizing innovative and creative potentials of each of its members. Good organizational health will take on added importance in the future as demographers see increasingly frustrated employess with thwarted goals during the next decade (Gottschalk 1981). With less than optimal climate higher educational institutions will be unable to fully address the challenges they will face in the future. The challenges, however must be met.

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